

Disability Campaign.org

Eye Health Information



When it comes to your overall health, your eyes matter. Whether you see clearly or not, it's important not to overlook routine eye care. Regular eye exams allow your eye care specialist to correct any vision changes, detect eye problems at the earliest stage, and even catch other health conditions—like diabetes or high blood pressure—that may have gone undetected.

When should I get my eyes checked?

Your age, health, and risk of developing eye problems determine how often you should have your eyes examined. Pediatricians will examine the eyes of children 5 years and younger. Before a child enters the first grade, a professional eye specialist should examine him/her and reexamine every two years. Adults should have their eyes examined every 1-5 years by an eye specialist. These are general examples; based on your specific needs, your health provider and/or eye specialist will inform you on the frequency of your eye exams.

Eye care specialists

Three kinds of eye specialist may perform an eye exam:

1. **Ophthalmologists** are medical doctors who provide full eye care—including a complete eye exam, prescription of corrective lens, diagnosis and treatment for complex eye diseases, and surgical procedures.

2. **Optometrists**, like ophthalmologist, provide complete eye exams and prescribe corrective lens, but diagnose and treat common (not complex) eye disorders/diseases. If you have a more complex or severe problem, or need surgery, your general health practitioner or optometrist may refer you to an ophthalmologist.
3. **Opticians** fill prescriptions for eyeglasses. They assemble, fit, and sell eyeglasses, and some opticians sell contact lens.

What to Expect at Your Eye Exam

During an eye exam, your eye specialist will review your medical history and complete a series of tests to determine the health of your eyes and evaluate your vision. If you wear prescription glasses or contacts, bring them to your appointment.

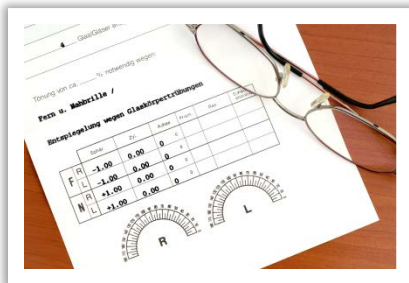
- **Retinoscopy.** This test may help determine your prescription. You will be given a large target to focus on, typically a chart with letters, while a small light is directed at your eye.
- **Refraction.** With this exam, your eye specialist determines your exact vision prescription (if you are farsighted, nearsighted, have astigmatism or presbyopia). Your eye specialist will place an instrument in front of your eyes and show you a series of lens choices.
- **Cover Test.** During this exam, your eye specialist will check the alignment of your eyes by having you focus on an object at a distance while covering an eye.
- **Slit-Lamp Examination.** This exam allows your eye specialist to examine the health of your eye. The doctor will shine the lamp into your eye to check for cataracts, corneal ulcers, diabetic eye disease, macular generation and other eye conditions.



- **The Glaucoma Test.** With a glaucoma test, your eye specialist will measure the pressure inside your eye. The most common glaucoma test is when a machine blows a small puff of air towards your eye.
- **Visual Field Test.** This exam checks for possible blind spots in your peripheral vision.
- **Dilation.** Your eye specialist will place dilating drops in your eyes to make the pupils of your eyes bigger, allowing him/her to get a better view into the internal structures of your eye. Your eyes will be sensitive to light for a few hours after the exam, so bring along sunglasses or a driver for your trip home.

Will I need glasses? Can I use contact lens?

If you have vision problems, your eye specialist may prescribe glasses and/or contacts, or recommend laser eye surgery, to correct your vision. Your options will be determined by your health, your stylistic preference, and your daily needs/hobbies (computer use, outdoor



recreations, etc.). Please note your prescription is unique to your vision needs, therefore you should not share glasses/contact lens. If your prescription is expired or you experience new or worsening symptoms, contact your eye specialist's office to schedule an appointment.

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